

Message Text

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ACTION EA-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CU-04 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-10

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FM AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5590

INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE

AMEMBASSY JAKARTA

CINCPAC

CONFIDENTIAL KUALA LUMPUR 4801

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, MY, TH

SUBJECT: RAZAK ON THAI SITUATION

SUMMARY: PRIME MINISTER RAZAK IS UNEASY ABOUT STUDENT
OVERTHROW OF THANOM GOVERNMENT AND OVER ENTRY OF THAI
KING INTO DOMESTIC POLITICS. HE FEARS STUDENTS MAY SEEK
OVERTHROW OF SUCCESSOR GOVERNMENTS NOT RUN TO THEIR
LIKING AND THAT KING WILL FIND ROLE OF MEDIATOR BETWEEN
STUDENTS AND GOVERNMENT UNCOMFORTABLE. END SUMMARY.

1. DURING MY CALL ON PRIME MINISTER NOV 1, RAZAK
EXPRESSED UNEASINESS ABOUT RECENT EVENTS IN THAILAND. HE
SAID THAT WHILE IT WAS CLEARLY DESIRABLE TO HAVE A
RE-INTRODUCTION OF DEMOCRATIC PRACTICES IN THAILAND, IT
WAS A RISKY SITUATION INDEED IF THE MANIPULATION OF GOVERN-
MENT POLICY WERE TO BE HANDED OVER TO STUDENTS. THE
TROUBLE WITH A SUCCESSFUL STUDENT ACTION SUCH AS OCCURRED
IN BANGKOK IS THAT IT MIGHT BE REPEATED WHENEVER STUDENT
LEADERS FELT THE COUNTRY WAS NOT BEING RUN TO THEIR LIKING.
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WM RAZAK ALSO EXPRESSED UNEASINESS ABOUT THE INTERVENTION BY THE THAI KING. HAVING INTERVENED DIRECTLY IN THE POLITICAL PROCESS, THE KING MUST ACCEPT RESPONSIBILITY FOR HIS ACTIONS. THIS WILL MAKE THE KING AND ROYAL FAMILY FAR MORE VULNERABLE THAN IN THE PAST. RAZAK ADDED THAT HE HAD A HIGH PERSONAL REGARD FOR THE KING AS AN INTELLIGENT AND STRAIGHTFORWARD PERSON WHO COULD BE RELIED ON TO MAKE PROPER DECISIONS. UNFORTUNATELY HE MAY NOW BE PLACED IN THE UNCOMFORTABLE ROLE OF MEDIATOR BETWEEN STUDENTS AND A CIVILIAN GOVERNMENT, A ROLE WHICH COULD PROVE TO EXTREMELY UNCOMFORTABLE.

3. RAZAK THOUGHT THAT ACTIONS BEING TAKEN AGAINST PRIME MINISTER THANOM IN CONFISCATING HIS PRIVATE PROPERTIES, ETC., WERE UNFORTUNATE AND EXCESSIVE. RAZAK EXPRESSED A HIGH OPINION OF THANOM, WHOM HE THOUGHT HAD BEEN A SINCERE AND, IRONICALLY IN RECENT YEARS, A SOMEWHAT RELUCTANT LEADER OF HIS COUNTRY.

4. RAZAK SAID HE HOPED THAT AS TIME GOES ON THE THAI SITUATION WOULD FIRM UP. AT PRESENT HE FELT THAT A NEW ELEMENT OF INSTABILITY HAD BEEN INTRODUCED INTO THE REGION.

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